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Britain's Naval Future

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ensure that a single missile will not sink a ship.

The site of the battle will be a key factor and it will be important to try to choose a location where land-based aircraft, fixed acoustic arrays and submarines can be directly involved in support of ship and sea-based aircraft. Speed and range will continue to be as important as always, but it will be important to try to create the ideal situation in which an enemy is held outside his own range of weapons but within one's own reach. Moreover, weapons will be used in an environment of electronic warfare and electronic countermeasures.

All of these factors suggest the need of technical compatibility at a variety of levels, from issues of allied interoperability to tactical command within the variety of one's own forces. One is faced by a conundrum in which the development of policy may be impeded by techuical factors. Technicians, scientists and designers require policy decisions for further developments, but these decisions are difficult to make until problems in technical compatibility are solved.

Concluding his work, Moineville enumerates three main impressions which come from the multitude of naval developments since 1945: First of all, the range of political purposes which naval operations can serve has widened. Secondly, the range of confrontation that naval support of political objectives can bring about has widened at both ends on the scale of violence. Thirdly, technical developments have also widened and diversified for navies. "Ultimately, then," Moineville writes, "the naval game remains interrelated with our technological explosions and the political changes that shake our world. It is very complex, highly technical, continually changing and very difficult, but it is also very important."

This is a book for any student of naval affairs. It is simple and straightforward enough for the beginning student, and at the same time, thought provoking for even the most advanced theorist. Moreover, it is the most concise and complete statement of the present state of naval warfare available to the general public.

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Cable, James. *Britain's Naval Future.* Anuapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1983. 220pp. $24.95

James Cable retired from a British diplomatic career in 1980. He now writes and lectures on international and naval affairs. He became well-known, in Western naval circles at least, after writing the excellent *Gunboat Diplomacy* (1971), one of the first analyses of the achievement of political ends by the use of limited naval force.

Like his earlier book, *Britain's Naval Future* is elegantly written with wit and logic and a virtually flawless attempt to present impartially all relevant facts and arguments. In his introduction, Cable notes that in the many British defence white papers

published since 1945, there has been much discussion of political, economic, technical and institutional factors, but rarely a sentence, let alone a sustained exposition, on strategy. Forecasting in the political climate typical of Western industrial democracies—the battle for government funds between welfare and defence requirements—will inevitably lead to more cuts in Britain's defences. Cable says that it is essential that a proper strategy be argued out before major structural changes are forced upon the armed services. He fears that the British Ministry of Defence may now be institutionally incapable of initiating this argument and, therefore, offers his book as a stimulus.

While acknowledging that Nato and other alliances are important to Britain, he states that any strategy must be based on enduring national interests. In Britain, these are all to do with being an island-state off a continent of other sovereign states with different national interests. After a brief historical survey, he notes that the Soviet Union is the latest in a long line of continental states which have posed a threat to Britain. The major differences now being the new dimension of nuclear weapons and for the first time since the days of the Vikings, the continental power has a significantly larger navy than Britain (and here Cable is only considering the Soviet Northern Fleet).

Stating that a democratic electorate needs to be presented with a strategy that is comprehensible, plausible and adaptable, Cable begins by posing the question "what can the Royal Navy do?" He answers this by an exhaustive analysis of several broad scenarios of war and "violent peace," which are qualified where appropriate to produce subordinate contingency events. Together they describe what the Royal Navy can and cannot do in war and in peace to prevent or limit war, or otherwise further national and alliance interests.

One chapter deals with Britain's nuclear deterrent and concludes there is one scenario which cannot be ignored—where this force of four SSBNs would repay its extensive costs, not all of which are economic. On the Royal Navy's contribution to Nato, he considers it is best employed in the defence of the sea lines of communications terminating in or near Britain and in reinforcing Nato's northern flank and islands. He emphasizes the importance of Norway to Britain's defence and adds that a demonstrable peacetime capability to reinforce the northern flank is a valuable deterrent in itself. Showing his grasp of all aspects of the "violent peace," Cable contends that pictures on TV of British ships shadowing a Soviet amphibious force in a time of high crisis, would be an invaluable stiffener to the resolve of politicians faced with Soviet threats and blandishments.

Other scenarios include situations arising from foreign pressure against British seaborne trade and her distant dependencies, and the gloomy possibility of the collapse of the Nato

alliance. Cable states that it is an irony of history, but in the latter case, the Royal Navy's role would become that of a "riskflotte," as envisaged by Tirpitz for the Imperial German Navy in 1900.

In his final chapter, Cable looks at the four major components of Britain's current defences—namely the nuclear deterrent, the defence of the United Kingdom itself, the presence of a British Army Corps and supporting forces in Nato's central front, and the Royal Navy. The Navy is mainly disposed in the Eastern Atlantic but is flexible enough to operate over wider ocean areas. He concludes that the first two components are essential for national survival, and that the Air Defence of the UK also makes a vital contribution to Nato. He concludes however that the other two components (the Army in Germany and the Royal Navy at sea) are incompatible in view of the inevitable relative decline in defence funding. Picking his way carefully he proposes that the army should be withdrawn from Germany and reorganised in order to maintain funding for, and hopefully strengthen, the Royal Navy. This strengthened naval capability would include projecting elements of the army ashore to assist in the defence of the northern flank and islands.

Nonetheless, he admits that it will be a difficult task to persuade the Nato allies, the British electorate and, not least, the army itself of the vital necessity for this change. But feels it must be attempted.

Cable completed his book early in 1982, just before the South Atlantic War between Britain and Argentina. Before publication and without altering his original text, he wrote a special preface including some first thoughts on this war. Here he asks whether anything in the war made nonsense of the rest of the book. Except for the one point that he (like the Argentinian Government) failed to forecast that Britain would fight to recover the Falkland Island dependencies, he concludes that the war does not affect his arguments. He warns about drawing hasty conclusions from the war, which he thinks cannot be paralleled in the range of options available to Britain, and the dependencies' distance giving time for consideration of these options. However, he feels that the war did reinforce some of his points; namely, the value of versatility in the shape of a navy, the movement of warships giving time for negotiation, the fallacy of the single scenario, and that island-states need navies.

Like Cable, I hope this book is read by many of those who can influence British defence policy. Even for those who are not in this position, it is a joy to read for its elegance and its thorough approach to strategic analysis.

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Olsen, Edward. *U.S.-Japan Strategic Reciprocity: A Neo-International View*. Stanford, Calif.: Hoover Institution Press, 1985. 193pp. $24.95